

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **21st November 2023**
Title: **Long Stay Pay & Display Charges Review**
Portfolio Area: **People and Community - Cllr Adam Bridgewater**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: After the call in period has expired.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Hub Committee

1. Authorises the Head of Assets to publish notice of proposals for the West Devon Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Variation No.1) Order 2022 amendments to be made as follows:

- 1.1 Amend the Pay and Display charges in accordance with Appendix A;**
- 1.2 Change Abbey car park from a 4 hour maximum stay to a 6 hour maximum stay car park;and**
- 1.3 Remove Brentor car park and Lydford car park from the West Devon Borough Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2022**

- 2. Requests the Head of Assets to prepare a subsequent report summarising any representations received in response to the notice of proposals for consideration by the Hub Committee before deciding whether to make the off-street parking places order as proposed or with modifications; and**
- 3. Authorises the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Lead Member and Leader to vary the charges payable in respect of off-street parking places to reflect annual changes in the September Consumer Price Index (inflationary uplift) subject to giving the public notice in accordance with Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 specifying the charges payable when the notice comes into effect.**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Parking charges in West Devon were last increased in March 2021 and the Council has consciously kept parking prices frozen for its residents and visitors over that time.
- 1.2 Since March 2021, the Consumer Price Index has increased by 20.66% and inflation levels over the past 18 months have been at a 40-year high. Service costs have increased, as have salaries, but in recognition of the cost of living crisis and challenging economy, the Council has continued to deliver an efficient service has not passed on those costs.
- 1.3 In fact, the Council has invested in toilets and public realm improvements and continues to install EV charging infrastructure at considerable cost and has now adopted an EV strategy to increase the roll out of charging infrastructure.
- 1.4 Whilst the Council is now considering elevating some limited parking tariffs, it is proposing to do so in a very targeted way that ensures minimal impact on the high street, shoppers and local residents.
- 1.5 A strategic change to selected long stay tariffs is proposed, which is forecast to deliver sufficient income to enable short stay tariffs to remain at 2021 levels.
- 1.6 The set of proposed changes to parking charges has been carefully considered to ensure they are fair and proportionate. They also allow us to offer competitive pricing locally for parking and visits to our towns.

- 1.7 The report also proposes to extend Abbey car park from a four stay to six hour maximum stay to allow for longer terms parking following feedback from the customers.
- 1.8 Members are recommended to amend Pay and Display charges in accordance with Appendix A, for a proposed implementation in April 2024. Furthermore, Brentor and Lydford car park should be removed from the off street parking order and the operation agreement with Dartmoor National Park Authority terminated.
- 1.9 It is also recommended that the Director of Place and Enterprise is authorised in consultation with the Lead Member and Leader of the Council to vary the charges payable to reflect annual changes in the Consumer Price Index (September) subject to a public consultation.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is aware of the importance of car parking sites to the development and prosperity of the Borough. The tariff review proposed ensures parking charges cover the costs of managing the car parks and their maintenance, whilst remaining competitive with other providers and comparable with other similar local authorities' providers.
- 2.2 The last amendment to the car parks tariffs took place in March 2021, where tariffs were increased by 4%. Parking charges have not increased since.
- 2.3 Between March 2021 and September 2023, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by 20.66%. Inflation levels over the past 18 months have been at a 40-year high.
- 2.4 In the financial year 2022/23 the Council had a shortfall in car parking income of £168,000 (16%) against the budgeted income target of £1.036 million. The impact of the Covid pandemic and online shopping continue to have an impact and town centre car parks have not made a full recovery.
- 2.5 The Council has not met its car parking income target for several years. So, there is a need to set appropriate tariffs that reflect the cost of the assets and parking service, given the ongoing pressures to parking income.
- 2.6 Car parking income is used to support the vital street scene services provided in the Borough which includes street cleansing, open spaces, parks, public conveniences, and litter bin emptying.
- 2.7 The costs of operating these services have significantly increased due to staffing costs, fuel, utility costs, contract costs etc

- 2.8 Car parking income has been used to support projects such as the electric charging point provision across the Borough, improvement works at Bedford toilets, Tavistock bus station toilets as well as the bus station itself.
- 2.9 Current charges remain low and there is a need to ensure there is a balanced budget given the inflationary pressures noted above.
- 2.10 Therefore, this report seeks to implement an inflationary increase as set out in Appendix A, across long stay car park assets rounded to the nearest 10 pence.

Electric Charging Points in Tavistock, Okehampton, Hatherleigh and Chagford



Lydford and Brentor Car Park

- 2.11 The Council have been in an agreement with Dartmoor National Park Authority since 1970 to manage and operate the car park and public conveniences at Lydford and Brentor car park.
- 2.12 Dartmoor National Park Authority resolved to implement charges in a number of their car parks within the National Park which included Lydford.
- 2.13 Fees generated from this car park will be used by Dartmoor National Park Authority to maintain car parks, visitor services and continuing their outstanding conservation work.
- 2.14 Brentor car park and toilets are proposed to be asset transferred from Dartmoor National Park Authority to the Church.

2.15 It is therefore proposed to remove Lydford and Brentor car park from the Parking Order and the agreement terminated, and assets returned to Dartmoor National Park Authority.

3. Outcomes/outputs

Pay & Display Charges

Tavistock

- 3.1 Most parking stays within the Tavistock car parks are short (maximum stay up to 4 hours). It is therefore proposed to not increase the short stay tariffs in Tavistock to promote pop and shop parking.
- 3.2 The report only recommends increasing the long stay tariff (over 4hours).
- 3.3 The Bedford car park is designated as a long stay car park and is the main visitor car park for the town. The proposal is for the current up to 4-hour tariff of £2.00 to be increased to £3.00 and the all-day tariff from £4.00 to £5.00.
- 3.4 This remains a very competitive tariff for the main visitor town centre car park when compared to other main town car parks in neighbouring areas. For example:
- Multi Storey car park Tiverton - £6.00 all day
 - Panier Market car park, Bideford - £5.00 all day
 - Regent Street car park, Plymouth - £13 all day
 - Imperial Recreation Ground car park, Exmouth - £8.00 all day
 - Quay car park, Kingsbridge - £10 all day
- 3.5 It is proposed to increase Riverside car park from £2.50 to £3.00 all day parking. This provides economical alternative for all day parking.
- 3.6 Abbey car park currently has a maximum stay of 4 hours. It is proposed to introduce a 6-hour charge to allow for longer term parking.

Summary of Proposed Charges Tavistock

Parking Place	Max Waiting Period	1/2 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	all day
TAVISTOCK								
Abbey Current		£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60	£3.00		
Abbey Proposed	4 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60	£3.00	£4.00	
Bedford Current						£2.00		£4.00

Bedford Proposed	all day					£3.00		£5.00
Brook Street Current			£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			£4.00
Brook Street Proposed	3 hours/all day		£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			£5.00
Riverside Current								£2.50
Riverside Proposed	all day							£3.00

Okehampton, Chagford and Hatherleigh

3.7 It is proposed to increase each long stay tariff as shown below:

Summary of Proposed Charges Okehampton, Chagford and Hatherleigh

Parking Place	Max Waiting Period	1/2 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	all day
OKEHAMPTON								
Mill Road Current	All day			£1.70		£2.40		£3.00
Mill Road Proposed				£2.00		£2.90		£3.60
HATHERLEIGH								
Hatherleigh Current	All day	£0.30	£0.50	£1.00	£1.30	£1.60		£2.20
Hatherleigh Proposed		£0.40	£0.60	£1.20	£1.50	£2.00		£2.60
CHAGFORD								
Chagford Current	All day		£0.50	£1.20	£1.60	£2.00		£3.00
Chagford Proposed			£0.60	£1.40	£1.90	£2.40		£3.60

4.1 Annual Inflationary Uplift for Car Parking Tariffs (September Consumer Price Index)

4.2 It is proposed on an annual basis that car parking charges are increased by the Consumer Price Index to respond to the increasing costs of providing services, whilst seeking to maintain pace with the costs of delivery services, and to protect income streams that are critical to the delivery of key services.

- 4.3 It is recommended that the Director of Place and Enterprise is authorised in consultation with the Lead Member to vary the charges payable in respect of off-street parking places to reflect annual changes in the September Consumer Price Index (inflationary uplift) subject to giving the public notice in accordance with Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 specifying the charges payable when the notice comes into effect.

Lydford and Brentor Car Park

- 4.4 It is proposed to remove Lydford and Brentor car park from the Off Street Parking Places Order following the termination of the agreement with Dartmoor National Park Authority.

5. Options available and consideration of risk

- 5.1 A further 21-day public consultation will be undertaken following the meeting.
- 5.2 During the consultation period, customers wish to object to or comment on recommendations will have the opportunity to do so. It is anticipated this exercise will commence in December 2023. Objections will be considered prior to implementation of any changes.
- 5.3 Appendix A shows the revised Pay and Display tariffs.

6. Proposed Way Forward

- 6.1 The proposed amendments to the Off-Street Parking Places Order proceed in accordance with the recommendations.
- 6.2 Should the Recommendations be accepted, the following steps will occur:
- a. 21-day consultation commence (Dec 2023) to which customers will be alerted by notice in the local press, on the Council's website and in all affected car parks.

This will allow customers to make comments on and/or objections to the proposals, should they wish to do so.
 - b. If a significant number of representations were to be received, the matter would be referred to the Hub for further consideration,
 - c. Otherwise, the detailed implementation of the recommendations should be delegated to the Head of Assets

in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for car parking for implementation in April 2024.

7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The Council has power to provide and to regulate off-street car parks under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 set out the procedures to be followed before and after making any order regulating the use of car parks.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>The impact of the tariff increases is expected to generate £150k in additional car parking income from the tariff changes across all car parks.</p> <p>However, it must be noted that in 2023/24 the Council reduced its income target for car parking income by £150k. Therefore, increasing car parking charges as is proposed in this report by an inflationary amount (since March 2021) is taking the Council's car parking income back to pre-pandemic levels and a pre pandemic budget position.</p> <p>We will monitor the income and performance</p> <p>The cost of implementing the changes will be met from the car parking budget.</p> <p>The difference between the income and expenditure on Off Street Car Parking is used to support costs associated with the operation and maintenance of parking services, its infrastructure, and the maintenance of off street car parks. It is also used to support and provide other Council services such as street cleansing, toilets, parks, and open spaces and other lawfully incurred identified expenditure.</p>
Risk		<p>There is a risk that a significant number of objections to the proposals may be received, which would postpone any implementation, as the</p>

		objections would have to be considered by the Hub ahead of any changes.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Council Communities Environment
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	There are no negative impacts. There may be small positive impacts with customers considering alternative means of transport or care sharing.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		No implications.
Safeguarding		No implications.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No implications.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No implications.
Other implications		None at this stage.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A: Pay & Display Charges

Appendix B: Plan Brentor and Lydford car park

Background Papers:

None